

NCRN Inventory and Monitoring Program Online Newsletter

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1. Data Management Training Series to be offered

Members of the Natural Resource Advisory Team (NAT) have expressed an interest in learning more about data management, the various NPS databases (i.e., NPSpecies, NatureBib, Database Template, APCAM, etc.), and GIS applications. In response, Christina Wright, the National Capital Region Network (NCRN) I&M Program Data Manager, is planning a Data Management Training Series. The series is expected to start in late spring and will cover database fundamentals, use of NPS databases, skills for transferring field data to electronic format, an introduction to GIS and Theme Manager, and a discussion of the importance of metadata.

We will provide more specific information about the timing and location of the training in the coming months.

For more information about this program or to request additional training topics, contact Christina Wright (202-342-14433 x230; Christina.Wright@nps.gov).

2. Bat inventories set to begin

Inventories for bats in ten NCRN parks (Antietam, Catocin, C&O Canal, GW Parkway, Harpers Ferry, Manassas, Monocacy, National Capital Parks – East, Rock Creek, and Wolf Trap) are set to begin this spring. Dr. Edward Gates, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Appalachian Laboratory, will be the principal investigator. Dr. Gates has experience conducting research on bats within the mid-Atlantic region and has published numerous papers on his research. The inventory will include the use of live-capture and release methods and echo-location equipment, which provides the ability to identify species through their high-frequency calls. If you see Dr. Gates and his staff this summer, they would be happy to discuss their research; however, for safety reasons, please do not approach the researchers if signs indicating that research is in progress are posted. The study is expected to extend through the fall of 2004.

For more information about biological inventories in the parks, contact John Sinclair (202-342-1443 x222; John.Sinclair@ns.gov).

3. Vital sign selection - Where we are after the SAC meeting

The Science Advisory Committee (SAC) met on January 15 to discuss how to monitor as many as possible of the 51 vital signs identified as top priorities at the July Monitoring Workshop.

Breakout groups focusing on vegetation surveys, remote sensing and GIS, and water resources discussed sampling methods that could be used to monitor the vital signs that fell under their respective categories. Group members attempted to identify methods that would provide information about more than one vital sign so that the monitoring is achieving “the most bang for the buck.” In addition to the breakout groups that met on the 15th, groups focusing on wildlife sampling and air resources sampling held discussions via e-mail to accomplish the same goal for those categories.

As a result of this process, we have identified roughly 14 basic methods that are needed to monitor the 51 priority vital signs, including, among others, vegetation plots and transects, amphibian and bird surveys, remote sensing using aerial photography and satellite imagery, and water sampling for surface and groundwater. The next step is to develop protocols for these methods so that we can be sure that they can adequately cover the vital signs for which they were intended. We then will be ready to determine which monitoring methods should be implemented based on the information they will provide and the cost of implementation.

For more information about the monitoring program or the development of the Network Monitoring Plan, contact Marcus Koenen (202-342-1443 x 216; Marcus_Koenen@nps.gov).

4. The Chesapeake Watershed CESU - Everything you wanted to know but were afraid to ask

A Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) is a collaboration among federal agencies and universities established to provide resource managers with high-quality scientific research, technical assistance, and education, while also benefiting university faculty and students by providing them with diverse research opportunities. A network of CESUs is being established nationwide, with 12 units already instituted through formal agreement. The CESUs are named by the biogeographic region in which they primarily focus. The National Capital Region parks will, therefore, generally utilize the Chesapeake Watershed CESU (CW-CESU). Currently, eight university/research institutions and four federal government agencies comprise the CW-CESU.

Dr. William Lellis was hired in November 2002 as the NPS Coordinator for the CW-CESU. Bill received his PhD in Animal Nutrition from Iowa State University in 1986. He has spent the past 10 years working on freshwater mussel ecology for the USGS Leetown Science Center in Wellsboro, Pennsylvania. If you have research needs that you think might be met through the CW-CESU, or if you have any questions about mussels, Bill is available to assist you. He may be reached by phone (301-689-7108) or email (wlellis@al.umces.edu).

For more information about the CW CESU, contact Bill Lellis or visit the website <http://cesu.al.umces.edu/index.htm>.

This Newsletter is sent quarterly by the National Capital Region Network Inventory and Monitoring Program. The staff is based out of the NPS Center for Urban Ecology, 4598 MacArthur Blvd. NW, Washington DC 20007. If you would like to be added to or deleted from the mailing list please contact Sybil Hood (Sybil_Hood@nps.gov; 202-342-1443 x 229).